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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

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DATE: January 14, 1959
10:15 A.M.

SUBJECT: Corporal Regiments for Germany and Proposed Conference on German Alert Measures

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. D. A. Logan, First Secretary, British Embassy
Mr. B. E. L. Timmons, Director, EUR/RA
Mr. Russell Fessenden, Deputy Director, EUR/RA

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Mr. Logan called to inform the Department regarding the proposed deployment in February of a UK Corporal regiment in Germany in the Dortmund area. A second regiment is scheduled for deployment at the end of 1959.

Mr. Logan gave some of the background of exchanges between the British and German Governments on this matter. He explained that the Federal Republic had informed the British Government that the first regiment could be located temporarily in the Dortmund area pending finding a permanent location. The British Government had replied that this temporary status was not satisfactory; however, the German Government had replied that, although the first regiment would be located in the Dortmund area "temporarily," this might in fact prove to be of indefinite duration if a permanent location could not be found. The British Government decided to go ahead with the deployment, even though the situation regarding location was not very satisfactory.

Mr. Logan said that the British Government had informed the German Government that it could not pay more than the 350,000 pounds originally envisaged for the cost of deploying the two regiments. The German Government had acknowledged the British Government's statement on this matter, although had not been able to give a commitment to cover further costs in view of legislative restrictions on commitments of funds.

Mr. Logan said

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Mr. Logan said that the location of the second regiment, which will be ready for deployment by the end of 1959, is being considered. The British Government felt that the second regiment should also be deployed in the Dortmund area; otherwise, there might be considerable delays.

A press announcement on the first regiment is to be released simultaneously today (January 14) in London and Bonn by the War Office and the Federal Ministry of Defense. (Mr. Logan did not have a copy of the press announcement; he subsequently supplied this to Mr. Timmons.) Mr. Logan said that agreed publicity guidance had also been worked out between London and Bonn for the announcement today (this was also subsequently supplied to us).

Mr. Timmons inquired how the atomic warhead question was to be handled. He indicated that this question was naturally a matter of considerable concern to the United States, since the warheads would in fact be furnished by us and in our custody. Our policy has always been, in response to questions about the presence of nuclear weapons in specific countries or locations, to state that it is our policy neither to confirm nor deny their presence. In previous discussions, we had understood that the British Government agreed to follow a similar line in response to any questions of this sort. We would have preferred to have had time to consider the British press guidance to be used in the announcement of the Corporal deployment and perhaps to have offered some observations thereon.

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Mr. Logan said that he also wished to mention the proposal for having SHAPE call a conference in Bonn to discuss alert measures in Germany. Mr. Logan explained that he had no specific instructions on this subject at present, but judging by correspondence he had seen between the UK NATO Delegation and London, he had the impression that the UK will shortly be asking the US whether we are doing anything to facilitate the holding of such a conference. The general feeling in the British Government is that the present atmosphere is favorable to new initiatives by the three powers because the German Government, in the light of the Berlin situation, might be more favorably disposed toward moving ahead. The British Government also felt that the Conference should be called by SACEUR.

Mr. Timmons said that he was generally aware of plans to call such a conference, but did not know the exact status. He promised to look into the matter and inform Mr. Logan.

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